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INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE
RUEHUB/USINT HAVANA 0043
RUCPDO/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHINGTON DC
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KUALA LUMPUR 000943

SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA/CCA JHILLSMAN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/20/2019

TAGS: [CU](#) [ETRD](#) [ETTC](#) [MY](#) [PREL](#)

SUBJECT: CUBA: MALAYSIA REVIEW FOR SUSPENSION OF TITLE III
OF THE LIBERTAD ACT

REF: A. SECSTATE 115416

[1](#)B. KUALA LUMPUR 410

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Robert Rapson for reasons 1.4 (b)
) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Per Ref A request, this message provides post's analysis of Malaysian policies and actions with respect to Cuba, for use in assessing whether to waive Title III of the LIBERTAD Act. There has been no substantive change since Ref B. Malaysia does not have significant economic or political interests in Cuba. Post has no information regarding Malaysian persons trafficking in property confiscated by the Cuban government. Post does not believe a decision to waive or not to waive Title III will have a significant impact on Malaysian relations with Cuba; they will remain cordial. However, imposing sanctions against a Malaysian entity would be perceived as a negative political act, and would likely result in more vocal opposition to U.S. policy toward Cuba than Malaysia has demonstrated in the past, and could have unanticipated effects on other areas of the relationship where we are seeking Malaysian cooperation. End Summary.

Investment and Bilateral Trade with Cuba

[1](#)2. (U) Malaysia has a very limited economic relationship with Cuba. Total bilateral trade for 2008 was \$26 million. Malaysia exported \$7 million in food, furniture and electronics. Malaysia imported \$19 million of vaccines, beer, rum and cigars from Cuba. Trinidad Holdings Sdn. Bhd., a trading group based in Kuala Lumpur, has been the exclusive Malaysian distributor for Cuban cigars since 1993, and also sells Cuban wine, beer, and ice cream mainly to hotels and restaurants. Cuba represented less than one quarter of one percent of Malaysia's 2008 total global trade of more than \$336.3 billion. Total trade dropped during the first four months of 2009: Malaysia exported \$1.6 million to Cuba and imported \$100,000 of goods from Cuba. There are no trade agreements between Malaysia and Cuba.

[1](#)3. (U) Malaysian national oil company Petronas has signed a production sharing contract on four offshore blocks with Cubapetroleo for rights to explore for oil and gas in Cuban waters. Petronas has not disclosed the price paid for the rights or the amount actually invested by Petronas in Cuban oil and gas exploration. Post is not aware of any significant Malaysian investments in Cuba.

Scientific and Medical Cooperation

[1](#)4. (U) The two countries signed a memorandum of

understanding for scientific cooperation in 2002 that was designed to advance cooperation on biotechnology, primarily at the university level. Several Malaysian entities including private companies Bioven and Inno Biologics as well as Universiti Sains Malaysia continue working with Cuban entities including the Heber Biotec Company, the Centre for Molecular Immunology, the Findlay Institute and the Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology. Joint projects include a vaccine for lung cancer now in clinical trials and a halal meningitis vaccine targeted at OIC countries and Muslim pilgrims traveling to Mecca.

15. (U) The Government of Cuba offers scholarships to Malaysian students to study medicine in Cuba. Although Cuban medical degrees are accredited by the World Health Organization, the Government of Malaysia does not recognize them.

Other Exchanges

16. (U) Cuba and Malaysia occasionally conduct sports and cultural exchanges; there are two Cuban boxing coaches currently working in Malaysia.

Promotion of Democracy

17. (C) The Government of Malaysia has undertaken no policies or actions of which we are aware to advance democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms in Cuba. Malaysia is a vocal advocate of non-interference in the internal affairs of other

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states. Malaysia established diplomatic relations with Cuba in February 1975 and opened its embassy in Havana in 2001.

High Level Visits

18. (U) Post is not aware of any high-level visits during the past six months.

COMMENT:

19. (C) Although Egypt is now the Chair of the NAM, Cuba and Iran are also on the troika (as past and future Chairs, respectively). Hence we should expect Cuba to influence Malaysia's views on NAM issues. Malaysia objects in principle to the imposition of economic sanctions and consequently opposes U.S. economic sanctions on Cuba. We would expect Malaysia to protest in principle the imposition of Title III sanctions on any country. The protests would become more vehement if a Malaysian entity were singled out for sanctions. Malaysia could be expected to respond to sanctions by maintaining or even increasing its support for Cuba in the UN and other organizations.

KEITH